HARAMBEE FLAME

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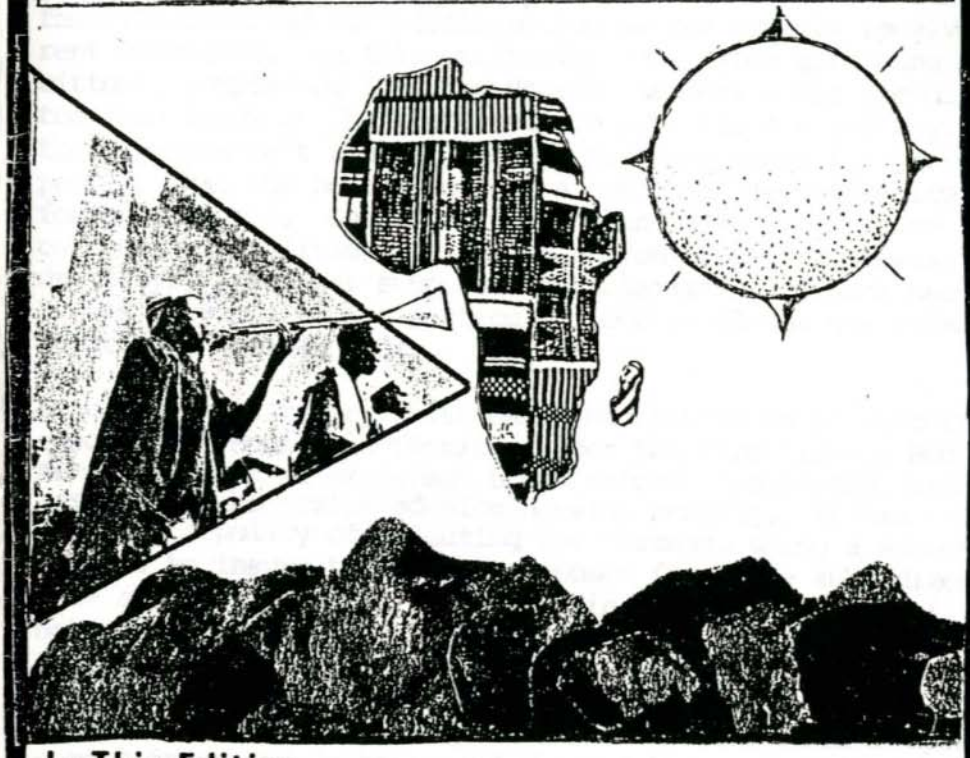

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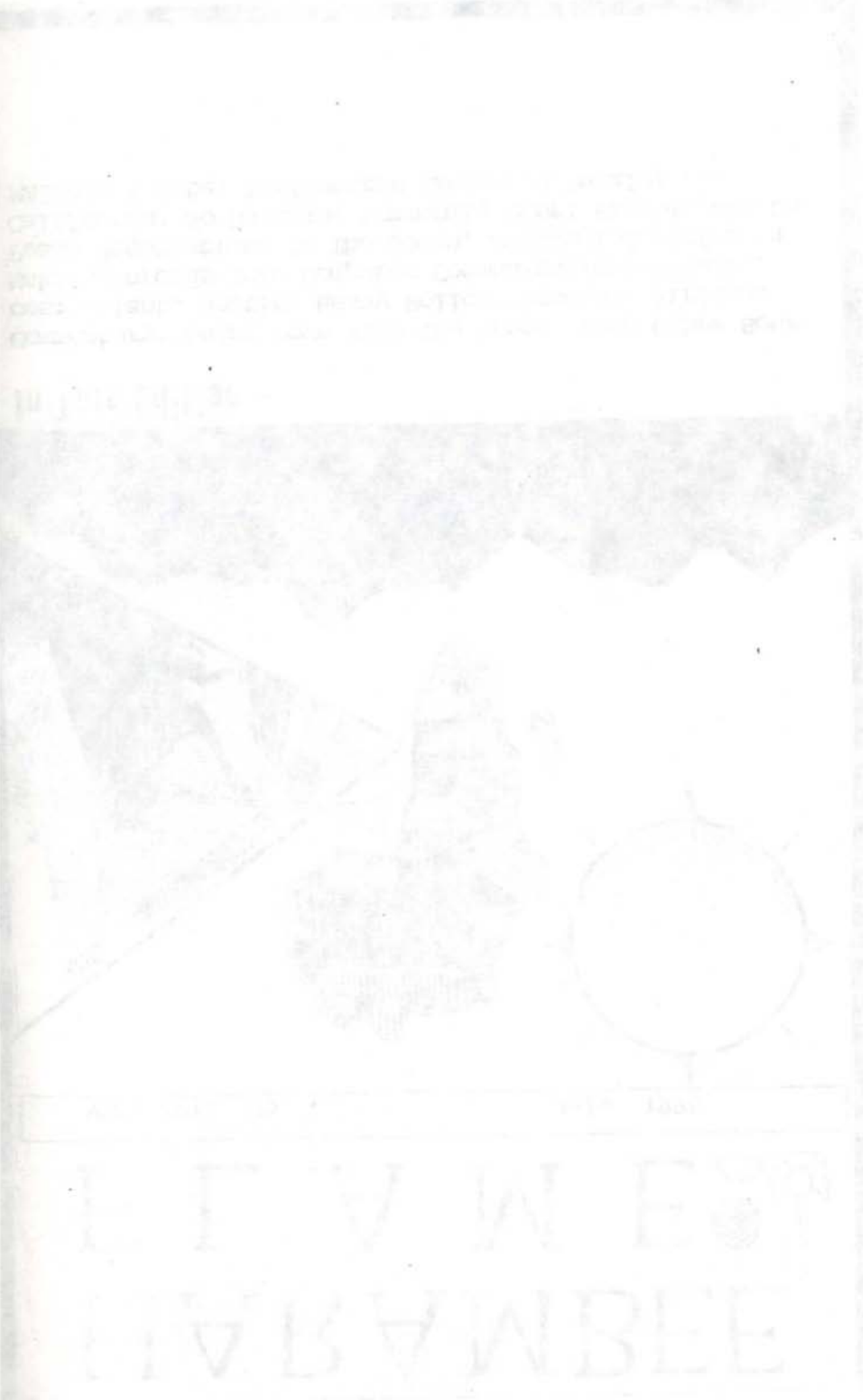

Commentary

Earlier this week, as of this writing, Omaha news media gave considerable coverage to a controversy surrounding Omaha Housing Authority plans to purchase a duplex in an upper-middle-class European(Caucasian) neighborhood. The planned purchase is part of the Housing Authority's scattered-site housing program in which it buys homes in various parts of the city for rental by low-income families. The families selected for participation in the program receive rent subsidies. In this particular case, some Europeans bitterly complained that the Housing Authority was spending too much money on the property. To put this another way, these people felt too much money was being spent for **poor** people, that the house and the neighborhood were **too nice** for **poor** people. One elderly European male, interviewed on camera, was livid, ranting on and on about boom boxes, drive-bys, and other supposed characteristics of poor people. It was very plain what particular poor people he was talking about--the **African** poor.

Actually, this "angry white male" had little to be concerned about. The Housing Authority, under the direction of Bob Armstrong, has an excellent track record, reportedly, with respect to the scattered-site housing program. It has followed a policy of selecting for success, using a screening process to insure that persons chosen for these subsidized home are the most likely to maintain the properties well, hold jobs, and otherwise not cause the Housing Authority embarrassment and/or generate "white" backlash.

No doubt, the elderly European's anti-African remarks upset some Sisters and Brothers and shocked the more naive(blind) of us. But there's little point in tripping on how reflective of Caucasian-supremacist attitude the old buzzard's remarks were or how reflective of the atitudes of his neighbors. The more crucial question is whether or to what degree scattered-site housing and other integrationist(by design or in effect) housing schemes benefit us.

In Omaha, as in many other cities, low-income housing projects have proved to be catastrophies, with the projects evolving, over the years, into veritable reservaions and/or war zones. Logan Fontenelle projects on Omaha's north side, became known as "Vietnam," a kind of junior Cabrini Green—the infamous high-rise reservation in Chicago. Over the past couple of years, the city of Omaha has demolished most or much of its various housing projects, with the rationale of the Housing Authority Director being that they had become dens of drug-dealing, violence, and other social ills; and that getting heavy concentrations of people out of these conditions would improve their chances of making news lives for themselves. As these buildings have been torn down, the displaced have had to have somewhere to live. The scattered-site housing program has served to meet, in part, this need.

We don't have information as to how many African or other people in Omaha have been moved from low-income projects to other subsidized housing or what kinds of concrete impacts such relocations have had on their lives, insofar as employment, family stability, etc. are concerned. But we do know what census figures tell us about the percentage of the overall Omaha population that is comprised of our people--somewhere between 10 and 12, with the greatest concentration being in the 11th. legislative district, or the so-called "near north side." We know that, as throughout most of the rest of the U.S., there is a great difference between the quality of life for Africans in Omaha and that of Omaha's European population. We earn less money, own less property, have no political clout to speak of, are less well served by those institutions which our tax dollars support.

In a real sense, we form a kind of "untouchable" caste, often crowded together in run-down neighborhoods--whether projects or not. For economically poor Africans, our communities are killing fields where our young especially take and lose precious lives behind drugs, set colors, fragile egos, etc. It can be said that many of our communities, under these conditions, are breeding grounds of despair in which the social and economic ills that afflict us grow in a spiral of regeneration. But as true as all this is, our close proximity to each other gives or can give us pro-

tection against the feeling of being alone against enemy forces.

Bloods, Crips, and other such groupings of our youth, in forming their sets, exhibit a sense of this feeling of being alone against enemy forces. The creation of these sets is, in part, a reaction to this. These young Brothers and Sisters understand that there is strength to be derived in numbers. Unfortunately, they are operating on the basis of a little picture instead of the big one. They have established little pockets of togetherness that function in opposition to each other, further weakening the already fragile **potential** for unity that our communities/the big picture represent.

In fact, it is the activities of many of these gang-bangers--drive-by shootings and other violence, crack-slinging, etc.--that have done much to make life unsafe for and heightened the frustration and despair of our people who are living in projects and other low-income 'hoods. Feeling unsafe and under-seige, many of our people want and/or seek escape. Scattered-site housing and similar programs provide this escape. But while escape may provide at least temporary relief for the escapees, if the problem isn't solved, it both remains with those who haven't escaped and frequently catches up to those who have.

Gang-bangers often do seek escape, but through alcohol, crack, and other drugs. Geographically speaking, they stand "their" ground, claim turf, are down for "their" 'hoods. They're not solving any problem related to our overall condition. But by identifying with "their" hoods and being down with their sets, they are doing on a small scale what others of us ought to be doing on a large scale. Namely, they're building group solidarity and, to some extent, exhibiting self-reliance. More concretely, when a Blood, Vice Lord, or whatever kills or dies over some colors, it isn't really the color he's tripping on but the group solidarity or familyhood that the particular color symbolizes. He's standing up for "his people" and protecting the sanctity of "his people's territory." When a banger has a beef with someone from another set--if he feels he's been dissed or whatever--he doesn't call the Europeans' cops. He consults his fellow-set-trippers.

Without a doubt, the loss of lives from gang violence are

tragic **wastes** because, for one thing, African people own no turf in this country to protect. For another thing, the dividing of our people into opposing sets amounts to an **artificial** establishment of enemy camps among people who should be united as friends/comrades against a common oppression. Because we own no turf and because the sets are artificial divisions and also because the "beefs" are often of no real threat to anyone, the symbols set-trippers kill and die behind are symbols without substance.

But it is the **principle** of unity, of folks being down for each other and down for the areas in which they live, **not** the specifics of how this principle is exercised by gang members, that is at issue here. There is no question but that there are problems manifesting themselves in many of our communities that are making life miserable for African residents. In an atmosphere of random shootings; destruction of precious African minds by crack, alcohol, and other drugs; disrespect of elders; etc., many of us have come to feel alienated from each other and, just as bad, come to feel there is nothing we can do about these conditions. For some African people, escape is seen as the only way out. For others, relying on European government officials and police is the "solution."

But like the young Sisters and Brothers in the gangs, we can have some colors: brown(in its various shades), the color of our skin; and red, black, and green, the symbolic colors of the African world(the African continent and the diaspora). Even though we are on foreign soil, these colors should unite us, should be at least as important to us as red is to Bloods or blue is to Crips. We, like the gang-bangers, ought to be down for our set, with the set being African people, those in our 'hoods and, ultimately, the world of African people.

And while the color, brown, is always with us and is visible, the symbolic colors, red, black, and green, have to be brought into being through our making the traditional values of our Motherland our values. The practice, for example, of communalism would enable us to deal with many of the problems that plague our 'hoods. Instead of asking ourselves, how can I get out of here," we'd be asking, "what can i do to make

(Cont. on page 12)

Editorial Policy

The HARAMBEE FLAME is the monthly newsletter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(Nebraska State Pen chapter). Ours is a pan-Africanist publication, meaning that we view all people of African descent as one African people, having certain basic interests in common. Also, the HARAMBEE FLAME attempts to be Africentric, in that, through study of the history, cultures, and traditional values of African people, we seek to have and cultivate an African way of looking at things.

The main purposes of the HARAMBEE FLAME are to stimulate and inform. We list "stimulate" first because, more than anything else, we want our readers to be moved to question their/your own ideas, lives, and the circumstances in which we live and to challenge those things that must be challenged in order for us to move from a condition of mental and spiritual servitude and physical dependence upon Caucasian institutions to a state of collective self-determination. Toward this purpose, we present commentaries, poems, etc. These do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization.

The HARAMBEE FLAME provides information because wise people want to know what's going on and because certain kinds of information can stimulate the mind, inspire people to want to act, and influence them to pursue proper understanding so that the actions they take will be as effective as possible. The main vehicle we use to provide information is our "From Other Sources" feature in which we make an effort to provide news about the problems we African people are confronted by and the steps we are taking to resolve them. In this feature, we try to provide coverage of the activities of African people and developments affecting us in the U.S., the nations of Africa, and elsewhere. "Community News" is another vehicle.

We encourage you to submit your reports, essays, poems, etc. Please enclose stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

From Other Sources

Atlanta Hosting Heavy Police Presence

"In preparation for the Olympics, Atlanta's bourgeoisie has established a new private downtown security organization, the so-called 'A-Force', to augment the cops. Part security operation, part public relations tool, the distinctively attired 55-member A-Force is one of several Olympics inspired initiatives by Atlanta's corporate and civic elite to turn downtown into an attraction for tourists and suburbanites...

"ACOG[Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games] has mounted a massive security operation to protect the Centennial Olympics, with as many as 20,000 guards, 10,000 soldiers and thousands of agents from the FBI, CIA, secret service and Georgia state patrol staff taking part. The committee refuses to disclose the price tag for the operation...

"As was the case with the security planners for the L.A. Olympics, ACOG security chiefs have traveled to Israel to receive advice on anti-terrorist tactics...

"Security corporations are perfecting, and profiting from technology that will receive wider applications in police state functions long after the Games end. Researchers at Center for the Application of Science Toward Law Enforcement, or CASTLE, set up a p.c.-based command, control, and scheduling system for the Atlanta P.D. Bob Hunter of the company says, 'Most events will be concentrated in a 3-mile circle. There could be terrorism'. It's based on Joint Flow and Analysis System for Transportation software, first used by the army in Desert Storm. It's funded by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy...

"Symbol Technologies Inc. announced in April that it will provide scanning technology to Sensormatic Electronics, the official electronic security systems provider for the Games. PDF encoded identification badges and hand-held computers are part of the security system...using a two-dimensional bar code that encodes more than a kilobyte of information on a postage-stamp sized symbol. It can encode digital photographs, signatures and hand geometry

coordinates, and can be encrypted for additional security. It has been approved as a standard by the Department of Defense..."

-from "Counter-Insurgency Goes For The Gold," pages 6-11, Summer 1996 TURNING THE TIDE(Culver City, CO.)

Africans Making Inroads Into Computer Communications Network

[Editor's note: In a recent edition of the HARAMBEE FLAME, we presented information focusing on the failure of Africans to make use of computer communications technology. In the following passages, another side of this picture is shown.]

..."In the '90s, it's all about information--the Internet global network of computers and the Information Super-highway--and the people who have information will have an advantage. Futurists say personal computers are on the way to becoming as common as telephones...The Internet is influencing every fiber of American life, whether it's business, health, entertainment or education and culture...

"In the midst of it all, some African-Americans are proving to be innovators...NetNoir, the African American site of America Online, has African folktales for children, among its many business, education and personal offerings...

"There are literally hundreds of sites or home pages on the World Wide Web that provide information about a specific topic, business or organization relating to African-Americans. In fact, African-American presence on the Web has increased more than 100 percent since 1994, says Stafford Levon Battle, co-author with Rey O. Harris of THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN RESOURCE GUIDE TO THE INTERNET AND ONLINE SERVICES(McGraw-Hill)...

"Black-owned Internet service providers also are propping up. Although many don't have the glitz of America Online or some of the other major services, they do offer Internet access at lower costs and a variety of other services that are targeted to African-American computer users.

"United States Black On-line(USBOL) is one such service provider. 'The goal of USBOL is to build an on-line service that provides hard research that relates to African-Americans', says Kendall White, former technical director for USBOL. Among its offerings are statistical data about African-Americans, access to software programs, interactive discussions and forums...

"In Memphis, teaching businesses the advantages of Internet access is the goal ofc Jeff Cuningham, president and owner of the seven-month-old Computers 2000 Inc. His company has designed a home page that provides listings of Black businesses in the Memphis area and other information relating to African-Americans..."

-from "New Frontiers: The Net Opens Access, Information and services To African-Americans," pages 41-45, July/August EMERGE Magazine(Washington, D.C.

Note: The article from which the above excerpts were taken was followed by "Decoding the Jargon," which lists definitions for some terms in computer lingo. The following are terms and definitions related to the above passages.

Web site: A collection of related pages on the Web. For example, BET's, Microsoft's or AT&T's.

Web: World Wide Web, part of the Internet which uses graphics and hypertext links to exchange information.

Hypertext: Text, usually underlined and in a different color, which gives users shortcuts or quick transfers to other Web sites.

Home page: The first point of contact for a Web site, usually containing an index to contents of other pages.

Peace Negotiations In The Sudan

"In a surprising move, Sudan's Islamic regime has won the support of two key southern politicians in its attempt to build a consensus around a proposed peace plan and isolate the country's main rebel group rejecting the initiative.

"Lt. Gen. Joseph Lagu and Samuel Aru Bol have urged all southerners to back the April 10 agreement between Khartoum and the Southern Independence Movement(SSIM) of Riek Machar and militia commander Kerubino Kwanyin Bol...

"Mr. Lagu's endorsement of the plan--which calls for a referendum in the south to decide on unity or secession-- was echoed this week by Mr. Bol, a former deputy prime minister between 1985 and 1987, who is in exile here.

"Mr. Bol, who heads the banned Union of Sudan African Parties (USAP), says he is optimistic that the Charter will offer a permanent solution to Sudan's current 13-year civil war...

"Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir also appealed May 28 to the leader of the main southern rebel army, Col. John Garang, to make peace...

"At least one million people have died in the civil war launched in 1983 by Christian and animist southerners opposed to political and economic domination by the predominantly Muslim north.

"However, Mr. Garang's Sudanese People's Liberation Army(SPLA) has denounced the Political Charter. It claims that the SSIM are merely willing agents of an insincere Khartoum attempting to further divide the south...

"..a number of factions, each vehemently opposed to at least one other group, have emerged in the three regions of the south. In parts of Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile, clashes between rebels have become more common than battles against the government army.

"The divisions are ethnic and political. The SPLA mainstream is supported by the Dinka community, the largest in the region. The SSIM, whose troops are mainly rival Nuers, demand independence for the south. So does SPLA-United, comprising fighters from the Shilluk ethnic group. Its leaders however are at loggerheads with the SSIM...

"Mr. Bol says Egypt and Britain have been called on to mediate in the talks over the modalities of the referendum. 'They were the ones who created what is today called Sudan

and they should be the ones to undo their creation.'"

-from "Key Southern Leaders Back Sudan Peace Talks," pages 14 and 15, June 18 THE FINAL CALL(Chicago, IL.)

Prison Industries In California: No Bargain

"...this is the California Prison Industry Authority(PIA) product catalog, from which all the California State University(CSU) schools are required by law to buy their furniture. A semi-autonomous state agency, the PIA uses inmate labor to manufacture a wide variety of products that are sold to state agencies such as the Department of Corrections(CDC), the Department of Motor Vehicles, state hospitals and CSU. About 7,000 prisoners in 23 of California's 30 prisons sand and upholster furniture, grind eyeglass lenses and sew shirts and jeans. Inmate workers even butcher beef and make salami, chorizo, and hamburger patties at the PIA's meat processing plants...they still do make license plates...

'According to an April 1996 BSA(Bureau of State Audits) report, the Prison Industry Authority is not financially self-sufficient, but rather has lost more than $33 million over its 13-year history; overcharged its state customers about $12 million during the 1994-95 fiscal year for products of questionable quality that were usually delivered late; cannot show that it develops inmate work skills or reduces recidivism; fails to keep accurate accounting records; and overall is in serious need of reform.

'...the PIA plays a critical role in the political battle

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over criminal justice in California...Under pressure to justify vast prison and law-enforcement expenditures, which are projected to reach $5 billion a year, or 18 percent of the state budget, by the year 2000, Gov. Pete Wilson points to the PIA as the mechanism by which he is going to make the prisons pay for themselves...

'Legislators created the PIA in 1983 as a successor to an older program, the California Correctional Industries Commission(CIC), because they felt that California's prison industries needed to be run 'more like a business'. To

help the PIA become more businesslike, lawmakers granted the agency many of the powers a private corporation would hold...legislators allowed the PIA to receive its money from a continuous appropriation fund that does not need to be reviewed or approved by the legislature each year...

"But unlike a completely private entity, the state audit report shows that the PIA enjoyed perks that no company could ever hope for:

-The PIA's labor costs are dirt cheap: inmates earn between 30 and 95 cents per hour, and the PIA is not required to pay them for holidays or provide workers' compensation, sick leave, health insurance or other benefits.

-The PIA pays only one to three cents per square foot to the Department of Corrections for factory and warehouse space, prices well below fair market rates.

-The PIA does not pay local, state or federal income taxes.

-The PIA holds a captive customer base: state agencies are required by law to buy from the PIA.

-The PIA can set prices for dits products at whatever levels it chooses, and the PIA's are often higher than those on the private market for comparable goods.

-The PIA has received about $109 million in interest-free capital contributions(at market rates, the interest adds up to $54 million) from state general funds over its 13-year historty..."

-from "Working For Nothing: The Failure Of Prison Industry Programs," pages 18-22, July/August THIRD FORCE(Oakland, CA.)

this environment better for my Sisters and Brothers?" The value, or principle, of communalism places the interests of our community before our self-perceived individual ambitions. The value, or principle, of collective self-reliance would guide us away from our all-too-common tendency to rely on forces outside our 'hoods to solve problems we have--and, in some cases, **only** we--the capacity to solve. This collective self-reliance would not, however, dissuade us from holding government accountable for the debts it owes to us, whether by virtue of law or by virtue of justice. Acting according to self-reliance, for example, we would depend on each other to restore peace and mutual respect in our communities, instead of turning our own people over to the Europeans' "justice." On the other hand, being self-reliant would not stand in the way of our applying whatever pressure might be necessary to get government to maintain sewer systems, keep streets in proper condition, etc.

Many of our 'hoods have deteriorated, materially and socially, because of Europena' governmental and business policies and practices, but also because of our general failure to retain the remnants of community-mindedness that our foreparents brought with them during the period of chattel slavery. Over time, we have succumbed, more and more, to this society's individualism, material greed, and cutthroat competitiveness. We have succombed, more and more, to the psychological effects of the monstrous twin, the ideology of European supremacy/African inferiority. Having fallen victim to these forces, some have developed a perverted kind of self-reliance by which we are willing to "get paid" at our Sisters' and Brothers' detriment--through drug-dealing, political selling out, and other forms of "getting over" on our own people. Some of us, having "made it" by whatever means, figure, "I've got mine. Get yours anyway you can." Others of us have lost hope and have learned to live in misery--material and otherwise. It is the co-existing and interplay of these attitudes in our communities that make scattered-site housing schemes and other means of escape from our people desirable in many of our Sisters' and Brothers' eyes. But, eventually, it is going to occur to us that we are going to have to stand together and make of **our** communities what we want them to be.

-Editor

Community News

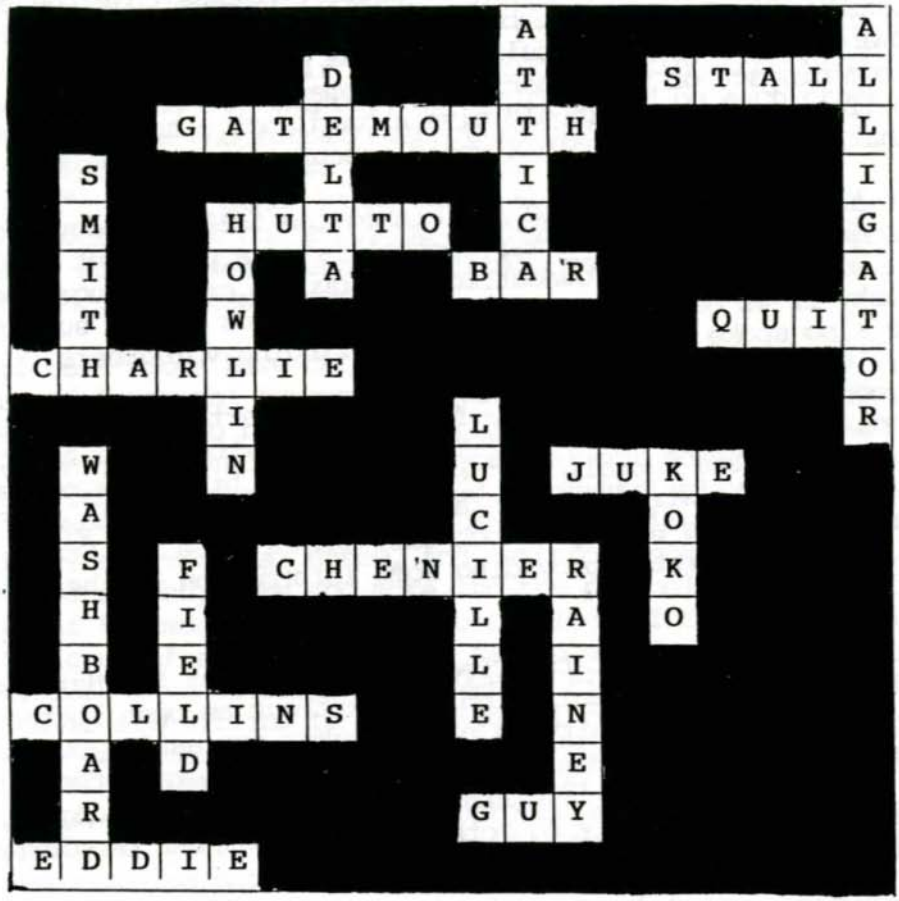
During the July 21st. KETV(Ch. 7) 10 p.m. news broadcast, a feature aired concerning the Malcolm X birthsite at 3448 Pinkney in Omaha. On camera, were a half dozen **Caucasian** males, cutting weeds, mowing grass, picking up trash, etc. The reporter informed the television audience that the persons on the lot were members of the Young Republicans of Omaha. Tim Heller, president of the group, took time out from his act of volunteerism to comment that Republicans believe government should give a hand, not a hand-out, and that they think Malcolm X would concur with this belief.

In an Omaha World Herald article on the following day, Johnny Rodgers, an African former football star a president of the Malcolm X Memorial Foundation, was quoted as stating: "We're lucky if we get it mowed two or three times in the summer." He also spoke of the difficulty of finding volunteers.

According to the July 22nd. World Herald article and to persons from Omaha's African community with whom we've had contact since the Republicans' escapade, the birthsite cannot be seen from the street, is in a wooded area accessible by footpath. There is an eight-foot-tall marker from the State Historical Society, providing some information on the life of Malcolm X.

Our chapter(at the state prison in Lincoln) of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization has sent out an open letter to the African community in north Omaha, expressing our disappointment in the community's failure to maintain the site of Omowale(Malcolm X)'s birth and its giving the Young Republicans the opportunity to both publicly mock our people and attempt to re-make Omowale in **their** image.

AFRICENTRIC CROSSWORD PUZZLE # 11-SOLUTION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Announcements

Linda Wolfe Keister, c/o African American Names, PO Box 1610, Sterling, VA, 20167, wants to hear from "African-American" writers interested in answering a questionnaire about their names.

Brothers, we want to read your thoughts--in letters and journal entries on love and life. Loren J. Blanchard and Billy Mims-Goodman invite you to contribute to a book expressing your feelings about relationships, loss, identity, living as a part of a so-called endangered species and other interpersonal topics. For more information, write to: Blanchard & Goodman, P.O. Box 871146, New Orleans LA 70187-1146. Submissions deadline is August 31.

The Not On the Guest List Coalition has been formed to speak against the Democrats' platform on criminal "justice" and to organize a demonstration at the Democratic National Convention, August 28-29 at the United Center in Chicago, Illinois. Demands include: expose and oppose the racism and classism of the criminal "justice" system; free all political prisoners in U.S. jails; stop police brutality. Not on the Guest List coalition(in formation) includes: AFSC,...Coalition to Free Mumia Abu Jamal,...Eighth Day Center for Justice,...Nat'l. Lawyers Guild,...Puerto Rican Cultural Center,...Contact: Not On The Guest List; 2048 W. Division; Chicago, ILL.; 60622; (312) 278-6706.

The African American Museums Association(AAMA) will hold its 18th annual conference on August 29-31 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri. It will be hosted by the Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Center. The conference theme will be "Capitalizing on Our Culture: Heritage Tourism and the African American Museum. A pre-conference workshop on the Underground Railroad will be held on August 29. For more information on the conference, contact Jocelyn Robinson-Hubbuch at 513-376-4611. Or write AAMA; P.O. Box 548; Wilberforce, OH.; 45384.

The prison chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Org. will be holding its fall symposium on Sept. 17. Our topic will be African-on-African crime. Write to us at P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE.; 68542-2500.

Back In Time

[J. Edgar] Hoover hoped the first edition of the new Rabble Rouser Index of "individuals who have demonstrated a potential for fomenting racial discord" would facilitate target selection for the new black nationalist counterintelligence program, launched on August 25, 1967. Initially, FBI officials defined a rabble-rouser "as a person who tries to arouse people to violent action by appealing to their emotions, prejudices, et cetera; a demagogue." They quickly broadened these standards to include persons with a "propensity for fomenting" any type of disorder affecting the nation's "internal security." New Rabble Rouser Index categories included "black nationalists, white supremacists, Puerto Rican nationalists, anti-Vietnam deomonstration leaders, and other extremists." Subcategories pertaining to black dissidents included CORE, SNCC, SCLC, Revolutionary Action Movement, Nation of Islam, Black Panther party, and a black nationalist catchall. Everything was computerized.

In March 1968 the Rabble Rouser Index received a new name, the Agitator Index, and headquarters directed the field to submit "visual material relating to violence by black extremists." Division Five wanted "clear, glossy, 8" by 10" photographs." Sullivan's men also requested a photograph of each of the one hundred or so persons listed on the Agitator Index. Upon receiving and pasting the photos in the Black Nationalist Photograph Album, Division Five sent copies of this mug book to the field, along with a Racial Calendar highlighting "the dates of...racial events." To make sure that his agents could track any "militant black nationalist" who might "turn up" in another country, Hoover approved distribution of the Black Nationalist Photograph Album to the CIA and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Source: RACIAL MATTERS: THE FBI'S SECRET FILE ON BLACK AMERICA by Kenneth O'Reilly

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORFGANIZATION

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Alaga(Chairman) - Shaheed Khaleel Hamza

Eso/Alakoso Asha(Sgt.-at-Arms/Chairman of Cultural Affairs Committee) - Kenny Walker

Eleto(Admin. Chrmn.) -Nbassa(Courtney Starks)

Olotu Eko(Education Chrmn.) - Mondo

Akapo(Treasurer) - Tyrone Hayes

Akowe(Secretary) - Dexter Brown

Akewi(Librarian) - Neb(Howard Nash)

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Afrikans are beautiful in our own right, rather than at the expense of any other ethnic group. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural awareness is germane to human growth.